

## Perspective of Teachers –Gay Beck, 2011 Utah Teacher of the Year

### Elements that contribute to high student achievement:

1. Small class sizes
2. Professional development available to educators
3. Collaboration time built in to weekly schedule
4. Prep time built into weekly schedule
5. Deep commitment from educator to develop a relationship with the student and spend necessary time to develop lessons with differentiation
6. High quality teaching materials and programs
7. Balanced approach to math and literacy
8. Interventions and enrichments available to meet student needs
9. Small group instruction, 1:1 instruction
10. Aide help available to work with small groups and 1:1 with students
11. Parent involvement, parental education and parental support
12. Parent volunteers
13. Access to technology at home
14. Teacher uses assessments to drive instruction

### Challenges of Teachers:

- 1.Large class sizes
- 2.Education not valued in the home
- 3.Create meaningful learning experiences for 60 kindergarten students
- 4.Meeting the needs of diverse learners
- 5.Differentiate instruction for 60 learners
- 6.Integrate content subjects with new math and literacy core
- 7.Working late daily, unpaid hours, planning lessons during weekends, vacation days and summers - also the cost of attending conferences
- 8.Spending personal funds for classroom resources
9. Meeting individual student needs- personal challenges, ADD, autism, allergies and fears that affect their ability to learn.
10. Time spent reviewing and writing IEP's and 504 plans
11. Behavior problems and making behavior plans with the psychologist-reward systems and tracking of these plans
- 12.Meeting new teacher evaluation expectations-additional time commitments
- 13.Time spent testing and tracking student progress for 60 hinders actual teaching time-overuse and misuse of testing scores
14. Stress students feel at extensive testing
- 15.Under funded system

16. Ideas being imposed on our profession and the need for a teacher voice in these conversations- we want to be in on the problem solving
17. Time spent writing grants for classroom resources
18. Time spent communicating by phone and emails to parents

What the legislators can do or refrain from doing to promote student learning-  
(thanks for allowing us to give some ideas in this discussion!)

1. Have teachers as part of the discussion on our profession so we can weigh in on the decisions-feeling our opinions are valued and respected
2. Visit our classrooms and see the reality of our job as educators
3. Recognize we do so much more than leave and enter when the bell rings! Achievement is not the only way to measure our success or a student's success.
4. Standardize testing cannot be the primary basis for teachers employment or salary. Children's success cannot be measured solely by a test score or reaching benchmark.
5. We pour so much into our student's everyday. It cannot come down to reaching a benchmark. For instance, Benson started K and was unable to move when the class changed activity. He would just stand there and we worked for months to get him to have the confidence to be able to transition. By the end of the year he confidently moved all around the room and would speak at show and tell. He made a friend. That was huge progress and his mom was thrilled. Maison was unable to sit at the carpet so we found him a chair that allowed him to move his arms and leg continually during tier one instruction. He had to learn to focus and not touch others. He had a sticker plan that divided the day in half. Designing a motivation plan is how he could make progress and learn. Teachers make accommodations and individual plans for every child that needs it. By the end of the year he got 2 stickers each day for following the rules – that was progress! Eagle layed on the ground or under a table when he started K. He just came to his second foster home and was despondent. He needed a behavior plan to give him success and lots of TLC. He was drawing incredible pictures as the year went on... he expressed his feelings in his art. How is that measured? I had a little girl whose mom passed away this year. I visited the home and brought an angel bear from our class with a card signed by everyone. She needed understanding, love and special attention. This is what my job entails that cannot be measured; a teacher plays many roles in a child's life. I recently got an email from a mom asking if her son could send me his high school graduation announcement. He said I was his favorite teacher and he remembered me telling him specific things about him reminding me of my sons. He wanted me to know he played football and his future plans. These are some of the many experiences that cannot be measured by a test score. I love this profession with all my heart. I want to be recognized as a competent, professional educator who knows what is best for her students.

I do this job because I am given the chance to help students become readers', writers and mathematicians but to also change lives and build self-confidence that will last a lifetime.

6. Funding specifically marked for class reduction in k-2 –possibly a cap on K
7. Allow districts adequate autonomy –not micro managing
8. Allow teachers a voice to help lead their own profession
9. Allow teachers to spend the bulk of their time doing the thing most important to us-helping our students' succeed
10. Give us the flexibility to use our expertise within our schools to ensure student success